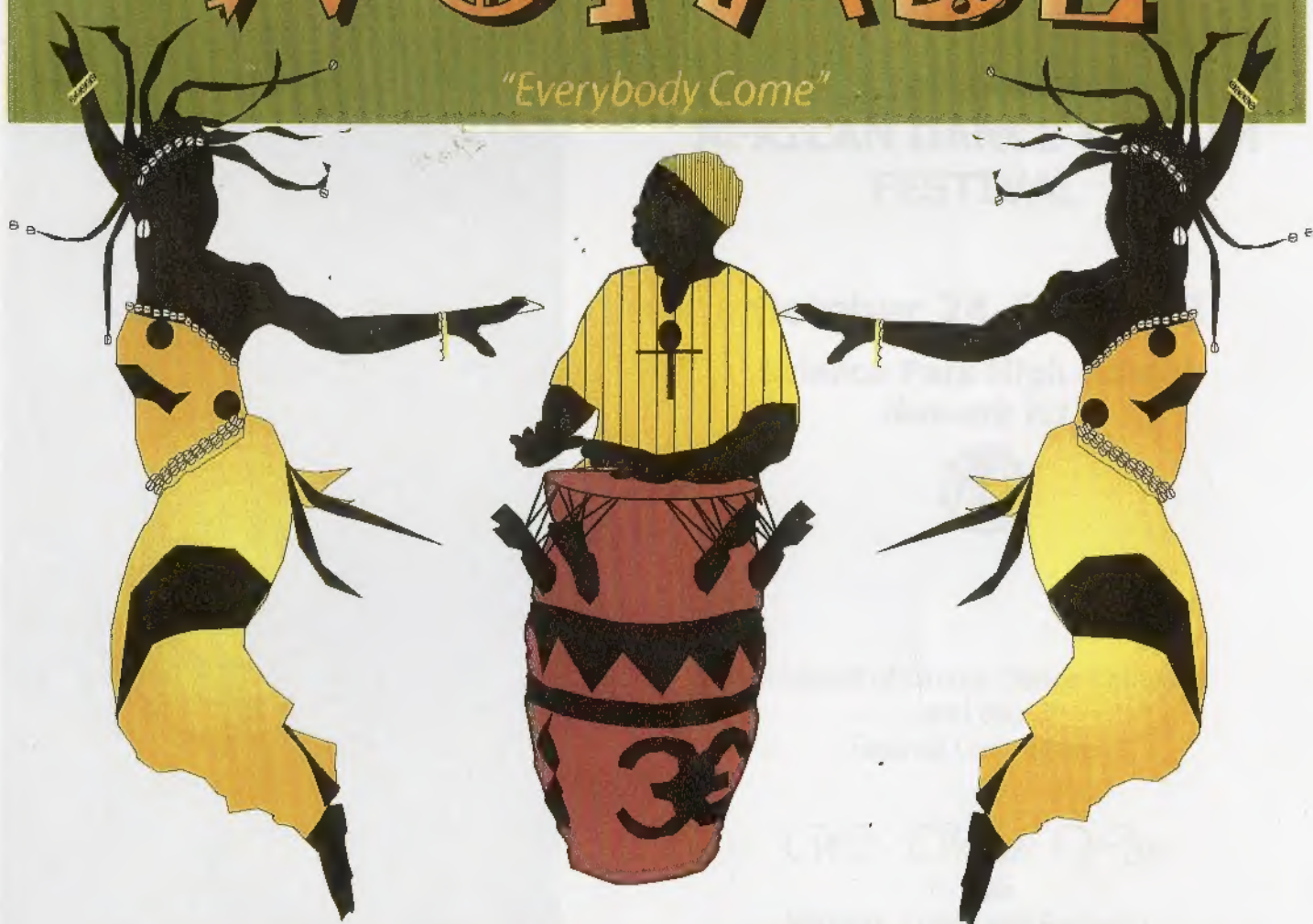


WOFABE

"Everybody Come"



AFRICAN DANCE & DRUM FESTIVAL

SCIENCE PARK HIGH SCHOOL
260 NORFOLK ST NEWARK, NJ

Oct 24-26, 2008



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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Umoja
Dance Company
presents

W O F A B E
"Everybody Come"

**3RD Annual
AFRICAN DANCE & DRUM
FESTIVAL**

October 24-26, 2008

**Science Park High School
Newark NJ**



On behalf of Umoja Dance Company
and the
Festival Committee

We Thank You
for your
Support, Love, and Patience.

Dance ~ Culture ~ Respect

Ase... Ase... Ase...

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This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/ Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and Adminis-tered by the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.



Thank You

Special thanks to our festival teachers, panelists and dance companies.

Teachers

Baba Chuck Davis
M'bemba Bangoura
Youssouf Koumbassa
Ismael Kouyate
Karen Miles
Mangue Sylla
Baba Richard Gonzalez
Esther Grant
Dion Rivers
Nimatoulaye Camara
Rich Baba Faye
Mama Yaa

Companies

Asase Yaa African America Dance Theater
Forces of Nature Dance Theatre
Kulu Mele African American Dance and Drum Ensemble

Panelists

Robin Gee
Yewande Kelly Johnson
Jerome Hunter
Andrea Markus
Sandella Malloy
Charmaine Warren

Special Thanks: Science Park High School, Newark Board of Education, John Sowell, Osibee J. Jelks, Celeste Bateman, Yvonne Onque, Umoja Dance Company members, Usaama Dance Company members, Paulette Johnson, Cindy Jackson, Carthy Dorset, Kate Ashton, Patrons, Sponsors, Arts High School Dance Majors, technical crew, custodial staff, security staff, festival volunteers, vendors, and journal advertisers.

The Festival Committee: Philip S. Thomas, Christine Smith,
Donna Bost-White, Rhonda Holland.

To those not acknowledged please forgive my memory lapse.
Charge it to my head and not my heart

With Sincere Gratitude
Karen L. Love

Wofabe

African Dance and Drum Festival

Wofabe means "everybody come" in the Sou Sou language of Guinea, West Africa. We are proud to celebrate our third year of presenting African dance and culture in New Jersey. We are honored that you all continue to help bring our dream to fruition.

Thank you for embracing the beauty and passion of African dance and drum.
Namaste

"The divine in me honors the divine in you"

Mission

The mission of Wofabe: African Dance and Drum Festival is to preserve and share the finest traditions of African dance and drumming and to encourage cross-cultural understanding. Our overall mission is to celebrate traditional African culture, aesthetics and values as resources for all people. We plan to utilize the resources and information gathered from this and other events to further promote the art form in New Jersey.

Goals

- To teach, learn and exchange historical information on specific aspects of African culture as it pertains to dance, music and drumming.
- To introduce and present African dance/drum instructors to the New Jersey community.
- To identify African dance resources existing in New Jersey (i.e. performance groups, instructors, venues, festivals, presenters, etc.)
- To establish a network and develop a database of teachers of African dance and drumming.
- To showcase the talents of local African dance and drum ensembles.

Objectives

- Demonstrate the powerful relationship and inter-connectedness between these art forms and people of all cultural backgrounds.
- Create a positive outlet for youth by demonstrating that African dancing and drumming is for people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.
- Increase community education and awareness of these important art forms
- Gather and share information on the available resources.
- Provide an outlet for groups and individuals working in these disciplines to share their talents with their peers and the community at large.



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- Audition Techniques
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- Ballet
- Resume/Vitae Writing
- African Drumming
- Pilates
- Dance History
- Improvisation
- Nutrition for Dancers
- Lighting for Dance
- Composition
- Anatomy for Dancers
- Partnering
- Yoga & Stretch

CONCERTS

LECTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

CHOREOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

for Seniors and Special Groups

MASTER CLASSES

RESIDENCIES

OPEN REHEARSALS

PRE OR POST PERFORMANCE TALKS

Karen.L. Love

Founder/Artistic Director

Rhonda Holland

Associate Director



For further information log on to:

www.umojadance.com

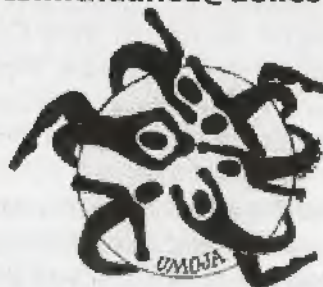
or contact

Christine Smith

Company Manager

973.783.5337

csmithdance@aol.com



UMOJA DANCE COMPANY

P.O. Box 1257

Montclair, New Jersey 07042

U.S.A.

Committee Biographies



(beauty)

Karen L. Love

Wofabe Festival Coordinator

Founder/Artistic Director: Umoja Dance Company & Usaama Dance Company

Born in Montclair, Love earned her MFA from New York University Tisch School of the Arts and her B.F.A. from Montclair State University where she was awarded the Excellence in Choreography Award and the Outstanding Senior Award. She received The New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship Grant, and the Harkness Choreographers Space Grant at SUNY Purchase. In 1997, Love was invited to The Bates Dance Festival in Maine as an Emerging Choreographer and later returned to teach for the Young Dancers Program. She was selected as a choreographer for the Choreographer/Dancer residency at the Yard on Martha's Vineyard, recognized in Who's Who Among American Teacher's 2004 and 2005 and was honored as one of the "50 Women You Should Know in Montclair, NJ".

Presently, Love is the director of the Dance Department at Hillside High School, NJ and the director of the After School Dance Program for Hillside Public Schools District. Love is a certified Pilates Mat Instructor and in April 2007 she received her certification in Yoga and is a registered teacher with Yoga Alliance. Karen is a proud member of Agape Family Worship Center located in Rahway, NJ.

She traveled to Australia as a representative for the dance department of Montclair State University where she both performed and taught classes in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. She has performed with Urban Bush Women, Gallmans Newark Dance Theatre, and The VonHoward Project. Love has studied West African dance for the past 15 years and was awarded two consecutive Folk Artist Apprenticeships from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to study Guinean Dance with Master Teacher M' Bemba Bangoura. Love has traveled to Guinea, West Africa, Mexico and Bermuda under the tutelage of Bangoura. In 2001 and 2007 Love traveled to Morocco, Senegal and the Gambia, West Africa under the direction of Baba Chuck Davis.

Love is a former Visiting Artist in Residence at Kent State University in Ohio and a former adjunct professor at Montclair State University. Her choreography has been commissioned and presented at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, DTW Freshtracks, Aaron Davis Hall, The Yard, Symphony Space, Danspace, Joyce Soho, Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center, Bates Dance Festival, Duke University, Northern Illinois University, Montclair State University, NYU, and Newark Arts High School.

Dr. Baba Chuck Davis

Master of Ceremonies/ Honorary Chairperson

Dr. Baba Chuck Davis, a native North Carolinian, is Founder and Artistic Director of the African American Dance Ensemble, the New York-based Dance Africa and the internationally acclaimed CULTURAL ARTS SAFARI, attended Howard University and continued his studies in African dance under the guidance of Babatunde Olatunji, Eleo Pomare, Mama Pearl Primus, Mama Thelma Hill and the Bernice Johnson Dance Company. His growing reputation as one of the foremost and accomplished choreographers and teachers in the traditional techniques of African dance compelled the American Dance Festival of Durham, NC, to recruit him for the position of Artist-in-Residence and to head up its outreach program. His desire to reach the young people of Durham who shared his enthusiasm and discipline for dance, was the fountainhead from which sprung the African American Dance Ensemble. He has nurtured and led the Ensemble on a course to become one of the truly premier dance companies of any kind touring the nation today.

Dr. Davis keeps a full schedule including appearances with the Ensemble, guest artist directorships, choreographer assignments, and research and travel excursions to Africa and international points. He is the founder and facilitator of the Cultural Arts Safari, which makes an annual pilgrimage to the continent of Africa.

Dr. Davis has been a panelist for several programs of the NEA. Since 1991 he has served as a Governor-appointed member of the Board for the North Carolina Arts Council where he sits on the Dance panel. In 1992, he was the recipient of the North Carolina Award in Fine Arts for his impressive and unique contribution to African American culture. This is the highest honor the state can bestow in the Arts. Dr. Davis is a recipient of the NY Bessie Award and the very prestigious Brooklyn Academy of Music Award for distinguished service to the arts world and beyond. In December of 1998, he received an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Medgar Evers College of New York. He has also received an Honorary Doctorates from Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.

Dr. Davis and DanceAfrica were recognized by the Dance Heritage Coalition as one of the first 100 Irreplaceable Dance Treasures in the United States. In February 2002 he was presented The Advocacy Award in recognition of dedication and commitment to Civil Rights advocacy, especially on behalf of People with Developmental Disabilities, by the Durham Human Relations Commission. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus awarded Dr. Davis with a citation for his years of distinguished service, loyalty and commitment to the arts as well as lauding him as a foremost, distinguished and accomplished choreographer and teacher in the traditional techniques of African American Dance. Dr. Davis has been selected Artist of the Year by DanceUSA. He has also received the 2002 National Governor's Association Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts. The City of Durham declared August 5, 2002 as Chuck Davis Day in recognition of his accomplishments and contributions to the arts. North Carolina Dance Alliance has chosen Dr. Davis as the recipient of their 2002 award in recognition of his years of dedication to the advancement of dance in North Carolina, the nation, and the world. The coveted CAPEZIO AWARD was presented to Baba Chuck during the Grand Opening of DanceAfrica, Brooklyn, May, 2008. Earlier this month, October, Baba Chuck received The Medal of Arts Award presented by the City of Raleigh Arts Commission.



(freedom)

Rhonda Holland
Associate Director, Umoja Dance Company

A native of Montclair, New Jersey, earned her BFA in Dance education from Temple University in Philadelphia. While at Temple, she was the coach and choreographer for Temple's University Dance Team, a member of The Varsity Cheerleading Squad, and she danced professionally throughout New Jersey. Ms. Holland was a principal dancer with Seventh Principal Dance Company, Alfred Gallman's Dance Theater, Whole Theater Dance Company and The Montclair Dance Company. In addition to her training at Temple University, The New Jersey Ballet School and the Montclair School of Performing Arts, Ms. Holland has multi-trained and competed in areas of related athletic movement including aerobics, advanced slideaerobics, fit step and flow training. This multi-training experience has given her opportunities to participate in exercise videos for world renowned fitness experts such as Karen Alexander and the Advanced Slideaerobics Training Camp International. She continued to excel through the arts in areas of television, video, and theater including performance segments on NBC's The Today Show, The Philadelphia Tribune's Morning Show and The Randall Cunningham Show. Ms. Holland danced in music videos for Boyz II Men and for Luis Miquel. She parlayed her acting, singing and choreographic skills into the theater arena working with the Rand Theater and Symphony Hall in productions of "West Side Story", "Pippin", "Chorus Line", "Evita" and other musical showcases. Ms. Holland further honored and expanded her dance skills through teaching. She has served as a master teacher for a number of years in various public schools and dance studios throughout the state of New Jersey. She later upgraded her opportunities to conduct several artist-in-residencies at Newark Public Schools, Elizabeth Public schools, Union County College, The East Orange School District, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Verona School District, Kent Place School and the American Repertory Ballet institute to name a few.



(freedom)

Christine Smith
Company Manager Umoja Dance Company
Journal Chairperson/Vendor Coordinator

"I am because GOD is"

Christine Smith received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Montclair State College. Additionally, she earned a Masters degree in Special Education from Kean College. She began a teaching career in Fort Myers, Florida in 1977. She also taught in the Newark Public School District before joining the Montclair High School faculty in 1986, where she currently teaches and facilitates students' acquisition of skills and knowledge via computer generated interactive Life Skills curriculum.

After twenty-two years at MHS her credits include: one of four Lead Teachers in the institution of a small learning community pilot curriculum titled Youth Leadership Academy, Faculty Advisor to two unique diversity culture clubs, producer/coordinator of the annual Dr. MLK.Jr. and Black History Month school wide assembly programs, former Assistant Director of the MHS School of Visual and Performing Arts Dance Company, home instructor, and supervisor for MHS Saturday detention program. She currently serves as a Clinical Faculty member in the New Jersey Network at Montclair State University. Christine maintains active membership in several professional organizations.

Although focused on a teaching career for the past 29 years, she has applied a combination of practical and academic experience to other areas of interest. Her professional career outside of teaching includes Company Manager for the Umoja Dance Company for the past 9 years. Continuing in this capacity she assumes responsibilities for marketing, procuring and negotiating performance contract, and securing performance venues for the company. Working with the Company has allowed her an opportunity to study authentic traditional African dance techniques abroad in Africa under the direction of "Master Teachers" of this important cultural art form. Chris also loves to dance and sing, and to that end she instituted and served as former director to the St. James AME Church Liturgical Dance Ministry of Newark, NJ. She has performed in several area plays, choreodramas, and concert choirs throughout the metropolitan area. She is member of the Metropolitan Baptist Church and a devoted member of the MBC Concert Choir. "To GOD be the Glory for the things He has done!"



(patience)

Philip S. Thomas **Producing Director**

Philip S. Thomas is Executive Director of Newark Symphony Hall. Mr. Thomas joined the staff of Newark Symphony Hall in May 2007 and is responsible for launching a revitalization effort to return the complex to its former role as a major venue for hosting and presenting a full range of music, dance and theater performances. Newark Symphony Hall consists of the Sarah Vaughan Concert Hall (2,800 seats), Terrace Ballroom (1,000 seats), the Newark Stage (220 seats), and the Studio Theater (75 seats). He provides oversight for the governance, human resource, finance, marketing, rental, presenting, and capital operations of the venue.

Philip S. Thomas was previously the Vice President of Arts Education at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the 6th largest performing arts center in the United States. Mr. Thomas joined NJPAC in 1992 as the Founding Director for Arts Education, and was responsible for developing a comprehensive Arts Education Department for NJPAC that includes a \$3.5 million annual budget and 18 full-time staff members. Mr. Thomas also served on the team responsible for the \$4.5 million renovation of the Lucent Technologies Center for Arts Education (a 29,000 sq. ft. arts education facility.)

Philip S. Thomas also serves as President of Performing Arts Services which provides cultural planning services in the areas of artistic programming, arts education, marketing, community engagement, and facilities planning for individual artists, arts institutions, education organizations, corporations and government agencies. Performing Arts Services also provides business services and creative direction to performing artists and companies in conceptualizing, financing, producing and touring artistic programming in music, dance, theater, and the literary arts.

Philip S. Thomas received a B.A. degree in theater from Montclair State University.

Donna Bost-White **Registration Coordinator/Box Office Manager**

Donna Bost-White is an arts administrator, arts educator, former dancer and dance advocate with 20+ years of service in the performing arts world. Originally from NYC, her training included studies at Dance Theater of Harlem, Henry Street Settlement, Harlem School of the Arts, Ballet de Puerto Rico and scholarships to the Chatauqua Institute and the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. Her 3 1/2 years on scholarship at the Graham school included studies with Ms. Graham and the environment was the inspiration for Donna to become an arts administrator and an advocate for dancers.

Donna graduated from the High School of Performing Arts majoring in Modern Dance and continued her studies at SUNY/Old Westbury that included tutelage under Merle Afida Derby and Ella Thompson Moore. Donna has a BS in Business Management and BA in Dance and several years of training in early childhood arts integration. As a dancer, she has worked with the Charles Moore Dance Company/Dances and Drums of Africa, Apollo Body Dancers and the Eugene James Dance Company,

As an administrator, she has worked for several organizations such as Dance Theater Workshop, Danse Mirage, Metropolitan Opera, City of New York Parks and Recreation Dept., Footprints Dance Company and Sheraphim Dance Company. Other activities include board membership of Dance NJ, Gallmans Newark Dance Theater, and as a panelist for Passaic County Cultural and Heritage Commission and for the NJ State Council on the Arts Community Arts Grants.

Donna was the first Arts-in-Education Coordinator of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation, serving both Ailey companies and the Ailey School. For over 10 years, she has worked at NJPAC in the Arts Education Department, where she is currently the Director of Arts Education and Special Projects. Her most important work is with her husband raising their son and budding young dancer/percussionist/actor, Daniel.

Congratulations! **Karen Love**

The Wofabe: African Dance and Drum Festival
is a reality because of your vision and leadership.

A big
THANK YOU
to all of the Sponsors and Supporters
who made it happen.

Philip S. Thomas



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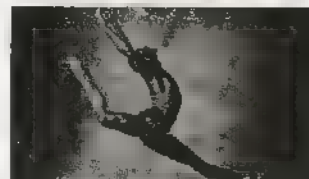
Philip S. Thomas, President

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**SPECIALIZING IN STRATEGIC, PRODUCTION, AND FACILITIES PLANNING
FOR THE ARTS, EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT SECTORS**

program

Welcome: Karen L. Love
Master of Ceremonies: Baba Chuck Davis

FORCES OF NATURE DANCE THEATRE

"TERRESTRIAL WOMBS"(1997)

Choreography: Abdel R. Salaam
Lighting Design: William H. Grant II
Musical Direction: Abdel R. Salaam
Costume Design: Helen Simmons

Through the fusion and synergy of myth, science, religion and spirituality, "Terrestrial Wombs" explores the origins of life on Earth within oceans, rivers, lakes and seas through the majesty of the Great Mother.

Eah Muni (moon sea waters), The Great Mother: Catherine Foster
NuNuNu Kiu (children of the great waters): Johari Mayfield, Maia McKinney, Daimah Talib'Din, Denica Abdur Razaaq , Aimee Graham, Natalie (Lady Black), Chenoa Brown, Ashley Brown, Melvin Black, Rona d Felix

Musicians:

Kofi Williams, Kwesi Nkroma, Ayanda Clark, Abdel R. Salaam.

Forces of Nature Dance Theatre Staff

Artistic Director: Abdel R. Salaam, Executive Director: Dele Husbands,
Rehearsal Director: Johari Mayfield, Administrative Assistant: Eugene Niles,
Company Agent: Art Source Management: Arthur S. Waber

(PAUSE)

KULU MELE

African American Dance and Drum Ensemble

Founder/Artistic Director: Robert Crowder
Artistic Director/Choreographer: Dorothy Wilkie

OBATALA

A religious dance from N'geria by way of Cuban .This is a religious system that has roots in nature and natural forces call Orisha. Obatala is seen as peace and purity.

Hip-Hop in the drum

Yololi

This dance comes from the Fulani people and is dance with the calabash. This dance is a celebration of the baby's birth, performed 7 days after the baby is born. In the calabash is placed gifts from the family for the baby.

Dancers

Daniele Bourget, Zoia Cisneros, Kia Holifield, Arisa Ingram, Acacia Reed, Ama Schley, Payin Schley, Eddie Smallwood, Tamara Thomas, Angela Watson, Fasina Wilkie, Ali Wilkie, Dorothy Wilkie.

Drummers

Robert Crowder, Kenneth Fauntleroy, Omar Harrison, Ishamel Jackson, Malik Ross, John Wilkie

Intermission

ASASE YAA AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Executive Director: Kofi Osei Williams
Choreographer and Artistic Director: Yao Ababio
Musical Director: Ayanda Clarke
Rehearsal Director: Kwame Azalius Ross
Dance Capta'n: Zakiya M. Harris

"An Ananse Tale"

This production is a narrative musical taken from a folktale from Ghana, West Africa about Ananse the spider. Asase Yaa will present this folktale through music, dance, song, and narration. Ghanaians have used these stories for generations as metaphors for real life events as a way of teaching their culture, morals, and traditions. This is an explosive performance showing the richness of African culture. Asase Yaa will show the beauty of the connection to God through animals. There will be five different types of live music, dance, and song presented in this production. The story is about Ananse the spider trying to receive all of Nyame's (the sky God) stories. Ananse stories show how the smallest creature can overcome adversity with preparation, determination, and focus. Children of the great ancient Africans represents the great empires of Africa including Ghana, Mali, and Songhai who had very dynamic and diverse traditions that will be presented and enjoyed on this stage during this show.

Dancers

Afla Ababio, Zakiya M. Harris, Natasha Diaz, Ma mouna Kane, N'dack Fleming, Asha Akowe-Halsey, Iusaset "U-U" Bakr, Mesha Millington, Akosua Dente
Jawana Johnson, Tamara Akua Holt, Darian Marcel Parker, Kwame Azalius Ross
Kofi Cooper, Taquan Ford

Drummers

Yao Ababio, Kofi Osei Williams, Kwesi Nkroma, Ayanda Clarke, Jean-Lemke Charlot II,
Kojo C. Johnson, Senfuab Stoney



(tree of God)

Festival Schedule

FRIDAY, OCT. 24TH

6:00 pm-7:30 pm
M'Bemba Bangoura
Djembe Drum
All levels

7:45 pm-9:15 pm
Nimatoulaye Camara
Guinea Dance
All levels

9:30 pm-10:45 pm
Baba Chuck Davis
Late Night Master Class
All Levels

SATURDAY OCT. 25TH

9:30 AM-10:45 am
Charmaine Warren
Yoga class warm up

11:00 am-12:30 pm
Esther Grant
Djembe Dance
Level: Beginner

12:45 pm-2:15 pm
BABA Richard Gonzalez
Afro Caribbean Dance
All levels

SATURDAY CONTINUED

12:00pm-1:00pm
Karen Miles
Free Childrens Class

1:15pm-2:15pm
Dion Rivers
Boys Drum Class

2:30 pm-4:00 pm
Mama Yaa
Ghanian dance
Level: Intermediate

2:30 pm-4:00 pm
Mangue Sylla
Womens' Djun Djun Drum
All Levels

4:15 pm-5:45 pm
Ismael Kouyate
Guinea Dance
Level: Intermediate

5:00 pm-6:30 pm
RECEPTION
(Invitation Only)

SATURDAY CONTINUED

7:00pm-10:00pm
CONCERT:

Forces of Nature
Dance Theatre

Asase Yaa African
American Dance Theatre

Kulu Mele
African American
Dance Ensemble

SUNDAY, OCT. 26TH

11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Panel Discussion:
topic: Teaching African Dance
free

1:15 pm-2:45 pm
Mbemba Bangoura
Djembe Drum
All levels

1:15 pm-2:45 pm
Prisca Ouya
Congolese Dance
Level: Int -Adv

3:00 pm-4:30 pm
Rich Baba Faye
Sabar Dance(Senegal)
All Levels

4:45 pm-6:15 pm
Youssouf Koumbassa
Guinea Dance
All Levels

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\$20 per session

Mon & Thur, 7-8:30 pm

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Baba Chuck Davis

and the **African American Dance Ensemble**



Congratulates

Umoja Dance Company

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for

WOFABE 2008

Peace & Blessings

Baba Chuck Davis

AND THE CULTURAL ARTS SAFARI

**DARE^{TO}
DANCE**

DANCEAFRICA AMERICA



(sharing one stomach)

Company Biographies

Forces of Nature Dance Theater

Executive Artistic Director/Choreographer Abdel R. Salaam and Executive Managing Director Olabamidele Husbands co-founded the Forces of Nature Dance Theater Company in 1981. Along with founding company member Dyane Harvey, Forces has produced high quality ballets, conducted dance classes and presented concerts and educational programs in New York City, the United States, and throughout the world for over 23 years.

Forces of Nature's cultural matrix is centered in an African and an American intelligence that is global and ecological. Its aesthetic has been critically acclaimed as visceral, thought provoking and creatively brilliant. Forces of Nature utilizes a unique blend of performing arts, which includes contemporary modern dance, traditional West African dance, ballet, house and hip-hop forms as well as live and recorded music and the martial arts.

Forces' was recently featured in the PBS Great Performances special on the history of Black dance in the 20th century entitled "Free to dance" which was aired in February 2001. Additionally, they were also the featured dance company in a film project with the National Association of Black Museums on the influence of African American dance in Western culture called "When the Spirit Moves" which culminated at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC.

Having toured in four continents, Forces of Nature's historic milestones include being the recipient of numerous awards such as best dance company in Mexico City's International Dance Festival (1990); leading the historical procession for Nelson Mandela during his first appearance in the United States (1990); and in 1985 being the first American dance company to engage in a cultural exchange with the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow since the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1969.

Within its first two decades, the company received funding from various federal and state agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts and the New-York State Council for the Arts. In recent years Forces of Nature has received two National Dance Projects grants from the New England Foundation for the Arts which included funding for creation and touring in over 22 cities during their 2002-03 touring season, and their 2004-05 performance season. The Company's new project "ECLIPSE: Visions of the Crescent and the Cross" will tour nationally and internationally during its 2006-07 season.

In addition to performing and touring widely throughout the U.S and abroad, Forces of Nature has gained national and international recognition for its work with youth of all ages through workshops, master classes, and training seminars. Through the development of ongoing programs that are offered to schools, community service organizations and cultural art institutions, the company has found that the arts coupled with informative, stimulating academic presentations and creative participation, serve as one of the best tools in educating our young and redirecting them toward a progressive alternative path.



(excellence)

Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble

Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble is the longest-lived African dance company in Philadelphia and is dedicated to serving the community by presenting and preserving culture, dance and music of the African Diaspora. Kulu Mele's mission is met through high quality and authentic workshops, performances, residencies, apprenticeships and study tours that seek to reclaim traditional cultural practices, enable self expression, and liberate and build communities. Kulu Mele serves an estimated 16,000 people annually.

Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble has for more than 30 years been a vital driving force behind the African cultural renaissance in Philadelphia. The company presents African American dance traditions rooted in the cultures and aesthetic values of the African Diaspora, blending West African ancestral traditions and African American creativity. Kulu Mele draws on the musical and movement forms of Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana, and the Senegambia region, as well as African American vernacular traditions including Hip-hop, Bop, Cha-cha, and Slop. Performances and workshops vividly convey to audiences (and especially to young people) both the artistic excellence in their midst and the meanings of dancing and drumming in the African and African Diasporan societies from which these traditions come. Vibrant dances are always presented with authentic and compelling costumes; choreography is developed by company members, and by master dancers and choreographers from home countries. Kulu Mele has kept the culture alive.

Kulu Mele is the fruit of many people's dreams. There is a strong feeling of extended family among Kulu Mele members. Most of us have been keeping the culture, perpetuating African culture together, for many decades. We are committed to learning. Since our beginnings thirty years ago, Kulu Mele members have searched out unparalleled educations in discrete drum and dance traditions from the Diaspora. To learn, preserve and continue this priceless community heritage of music and dance, Kulu Mele members have apprenticed themselves to older recognized masters and artists, traveling to study music and dance, and to become immersed in the cultures and traditions of Senegal, Guinea, Cuba and elsewhere. Apprenticeships and study tours include: Senegambian Dance Apprenticeship in Guinea with M'Bemba Bangoura (2000); Orisha dance apprenticeship in Cuba with Cutumba (2002); Company Apprenticeship in Guinean dance with Tenenfig Dioubate (2003); Apprenticeship in Senegalese dance with Assane Konte (2004); Study with Saka Acquaye in Ghana (2005).



(fear nothing but God)

Asase Yaa African American Dance Theatre

Artistic Director Yao Ababio formed Asase Yaa Dance theatre in the summer of 2001. Asase Yaa is a group of young inspired artist showing the connection between Africa and African-Americans. The Ensemble consists of musicians, dancers and singers with training in various disciplines. The company also has an African-American "Griot" that recites the history of African-Americans. They bring their experiences and artistic skills together to present performances that teach audiences the richness of the African Diaspora. The members of Asase Yaa have traveled to various countries including Japan, Korea, Paris, Amsterdam, Iceland, Ghana, Guinea, and Angola. Their repertoire consists of ballets of their own creative works. Asase Yaa host an annual benefit concert at York College in Jamaica, NY where showcase different African-American dance companies based in the New York tri-state area and Washington D.C. metropolitan area. This concert glorifies the contributions that African-Americans devote to African dance and music. Asase Yaa was created to bring joy to audiences through their exciting and colorful presentations.

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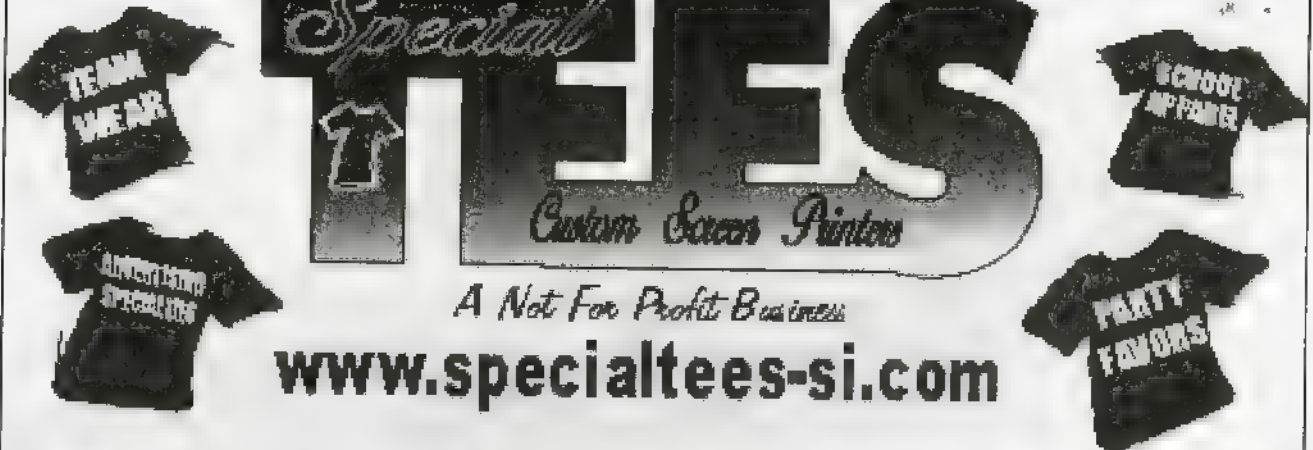
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Thu, Dec 18 - Sun, Dec 21
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Fri, Dec 19 at 5:00
 A Tribute To The Elders
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 and Ediemae Livingston

Sat, Dec 20 at 12:30
 Kwanzaa Family Workshop

Sat, Dec 20 at 2:00 & 5:00
 The Spirit of Kwanzaa
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Sat, Dec 20 **FREE!**
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Thu, Jan 15 at 7:00
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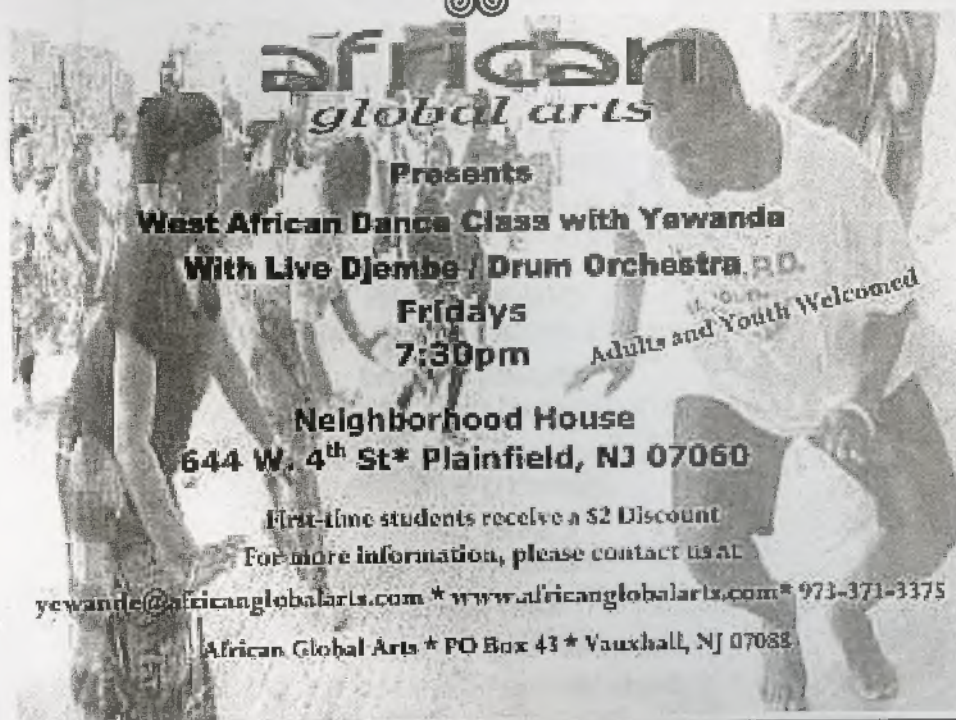


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